

Using Semicolons

You may know from experience that when you write a first draft, ideas often come one at a time. Consequently, your first draft usually has many short sentences. However, when you read over your draft, you often realize that some of these sentences are closely related or equally important to each other. When you find these pairs of sentences, you probably connect them. There are many ways to connect sentences. Semicolons are one of those ways.

Related Sentences: We spent this week reviewing the material. On Monday we will take the exam.

Combined: We spent this week reviewing the material; on Monday we will take the exam.

Sentences that are not related, though, should *not* be combined.

Unrelated Sentences: John and I will also study on Sunday. I need to make an A.

DIRECTIONS Decide whether each pair of sentences should be combined. Make your changes on the worksheet.

- If a pair should be combined, replace the period with a semicolon.
- If a pair should not be combined, circle the period.

EXAMPLE She has made a decision not to work on weekends; She wants to reserve that time for her family.

1. Geckos have no problem climbing trees. These small lizards have pads on their toes that stick easily to various surfaces.
2. Lake Baikal in Siberia is the world's deepest lake. Formed about 25 million years ago, it is also one of the oldest lakes on Earth.
3. Lowbush blueberries grow wild in Maine and the Atlantic provinces of Canada. Farmers sell the berries for use in processed foods.
4. Blue jays are extremely brash birds. During nesting season they take eggs from the nests of other birds.
5. The battle of Gettysburg took a huge toll on both sides. Casualties totaled about 23,000 for the North and over 20,000 for the South.

LESSON 3, *continued*

6. Migraines are often accompanied by nausea and sensitivity to noise and light, as well as by throbbing head pain. About 80 percent of migraine sufferers also have family members who have migraine headaches.
7. The beneficial effects of ultraviolet rays are not well known. For example, many hospitals use germicidal lamps to sterilize surgical equipment, water, and even air in the operating room.
8. The earliest photographs are known as daguerreotypes. Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, a French artist, invented the process used to produce them.
9. The cliff cities in present-day northern New Mexico and southern Colorado were abandoned more than seven hundred years ago. Southern New Mexico has cliff dwellings that date back to 1450.
10. Although a controversial project, the Aswan High Dam has benefited agriculture in Egypt. It provides water for irrigation year-round.
11. Countries around the world have established more than 3,500 national parks and other protected areas. Many organizations are working hard so that future generations are able to enjoy these areas.
12. The first planetarium opened in Munich, Germany, in 1923. The term *planetarium* describes an institution that develops education in astronomy.
13. Before becoming a painter, Michelangelo worked as a sculptor. He painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.
14. Peru is among the leading producers of silver. It is also one of the world's leading fishing countries.
15. Pasta comes in many shapes and sizes. The word *pasta* is an Italian term for *dough*.



Using Colons, Dashes, and Parentheses



Colons, dashes, and parentheses are three types of punctuation marks that you can use to combine sentences.

When one sentence names a series of items, use a colon to connect the series to another sentence.

Original: I took several important items with me on my trip to France.
The items were a camera, a map, sunglasses, and plenty of film.


Combined: I took the following important items with me on my trip to France: **a camera, a map, sunglasses, and plenty of film.**

Using a colon to combine sentences can help you make a dramatic statement.

Original: At that moment, I realized what I had accomplished. I had graduated at the top of my class.

Combined: At that moment, I realized what I had accomplished: **I had graduated at the top of my class.**

A dash or a pair of dashes allows you to insert a whole idea, or an entire sentence, into the middle of another sentence.



Original: My project showed how the planets revolve around the sun.
It was the best project I had ever made!

Combined: My project—**the best project I had ever made**—showed how the planets revolve around the sun.

A dash can also mean *namely, that is, or in other words*.

Original: The candidate for governor wanted to clarify three things in her speech. She discussed her desire to win, her plans for change, and her goal to win new voters.

Combined: The candidate for governor wanted to clarify three things in her speech—**her desire to win, her plans for change, and her goal to win new voters.**

With parentheses, you can include interesting information that might not be of major importance.

Original: My father told me how to put the model together. He's a firefighter.

Combined: My father (**he's a firefighter**) told me how to put the model together.

DIRECTIONS Combine each of the sets of sentences on the next page into a single sentence. Make your changes on the worksheet.

- For the first five sentences, combine the sentences by using the mark of punctuation that appears in *italics* at the end of the item.
 - For the last five sentences, choose whatever mark of punctuation you think is appropriate—a colon, a dash(es), or parentheses.
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LESSON 4, *continued*

1. In 1872 Walter Scott began the diner tradition in Providence, Rhode Island. He sold prepared food from what had been a horse-drawn freight wagon. (*paired dashes*)
2. The diner peaked in popularity in the 1950s. At this time the United States had over six thousand family-owned businesses. (*parentheses*)
3. Customers ate home cooking. The home cooking consisted of sandwiches, apple pies, and omelettes. (*colon*)
4. At one time New Jersey had thirty diner manufacturers. It was known as the diner capital of the world. (*paired dashes*)
5. The architectural frame of most diners was top notch. The diners often were made of stainless steel. (*parentheses*)
6. The American Diner Museum highlights the importance and significance of the diner. It was established as a nonprofit organization in 1996.
7. The American Diner Museum is one of sixteen museums located in the Heritage Harbor Museum in Providence, Rhode Island. Each museum spotlights an aspect of the state's history.
8. The museum is housed in what was once a power plant company. The company donated the property.
9. The museum is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian provides objects on long-term loan.
10. The museum honors the contributions of people responsible for the diners' success.

The museum honors the people who constructed, managed, and served in America's diners.